

## GOV. MORGAN EXPLAINS NEED OF U. S. TROOPS IN COAL FIELD

### West Virginia Executive Says Attempt Was Made to "Shoot Unionism Into Districts."

In response to a request from The Star, Gov. Ephraim F. Morgan of West Virginia, has prepared a statement on the history and causes of the mining war in West Virginia. The statement follows in part: "This has been so much written and so much said of a controversial nature concerning the attempt of union miners to invade the coal fields of West Virginia to compel unionization of non-union coal mines, and there has appeared such a great amount of criticism of West Virginia in the eastern press, based on misinformation, that I gladly avail myself of your invitation to make a statement concerning this movement and the necessity that existed for the calling of federal troops.

"When I became Governor of West Virginia last March, six months ago, a coal strike was existing in Mingo county. It had originated in July, 1920, while my predecessor was in office, and twice prior to my inauguration he had been compelled to ask the assistance of federal troops to restore order after assassinations, arson and various crimes had been committed. When I succeeded Gov. Cornwell, the coal output of Mingo county was normal, although the mine workers' organization supported a number of tent colonies whose occupants have continued to draw relief from the miners' treasury. This was done, however, although the operators in that county claim they have an ample number of men to man their plants and pay to the normal coal production as proof of their assertion.

"Firing From Kentucky. "Last May, two months after I had been inaugurated, the adult male residents of the tent colonies, aided by other persons living in their vicinity and in sympathy with them, crossed the Tug river and began an attack on several mining communities on the West Virginia side of the river. The firing, of course, came from the Kentucky side.

"At that time, after the joint request of the Governor of Kentucky and myself for federal intervention had failed, I sent the state police force into that county to enforce a proclamation of martial law which prohibited unlawful assemblage and later, when the troops were reinforced with two companies of the regular militia of Mingo county, enabled the authorities to control the situation. At the time the act creating the National Guard was not in effect and it was necessary to create the enrolled militia under an old act.

"Since the issuance of the proclamation of martial law crime has decreased in Mingo county. Normal conditions are rapidly being restored. "It was the enforcement of martial law in Mingo county that was cited as a reason for the mobilization of the armed miners of Kanawha and Boone counties. These were later joined by armed bands from some of the mines in Raleigh and Fayette counties. It was announced that the object of the march was to resist martial law in Mingo county.

"The insurgents exhibited their antipathy toward law enforcement officers on August 12, near Sharples, Boone county, when an armed body of sixty men held up, disarmed and robbed two state policemen, their arms, equipment and horses and under threats ordered them to leave Boone county. Four horses were stolen by the armed raiders.

"Attempt to Kill Policeman. "On the night of August 19, at Edwight, an attempt was made in that community to assassinate another state policeman. He was shot in the back by an armed body of men which left Edwight the following morning for Leno creek, at which point the armed miners began to assemble for their march into Mingo county, traversing Logan county in reaching their objective.

"These armed bodies continued to assemble on Leno creek for several days, patrolling the roads, halting and using railroad trains, pillaging stores of arms, ammunition and supplies, and invading private homes in search of guns.

"On the night of August 23 the armed assemblage had grown to such proportions (the number having increased to several thousand) that the officers of Kanawha county advised me they were unable to cope with the situation or disperse the insurgents, and on the following day I requested federal troops when I was advised that the insurgents had started toward the Logan border. I felt that federal troops were necessary because the National Guard had not yet been reorganized under a law that had been effective for less than thirty days and the state police were engaged in the enforcement of martial law in Mingo county and distributed at their stations.

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In various parts of the state. My opinion was to ask for federal troops or ask for citizen volunteers to repel the invasion. To save bloodshed I chose to ask the federal government for troops.

"Instead of sending troops, the Secretary of War dispatched federal officers to Charleston who advised Messrs. Keeney, Mooney and other officers of the United Mine Workers that leadership carried no responsibility and firmly requested that they proceed forthwith to the vicinity of Madison and disperse the marching miners. With the exception of approximately 1,200 men gathered in the vicinity of Blair and Sharples, the armed insurgents did not answer the command of Capt. Brockus to surrender with a volley of bullets. The fire was returned and three men were killed. The police then retired to Logan county and at my request did not renew their efforts to serve the warrants.

"When they received reports of this encounter the miners, who had returned to their homes, started another march toward Logan county. Automobiles by the score were commandeered by the armed miners and, with trucks loaded with ammunition, they again started for the Logan border. "After I had sent the adjutant general of West Virginia to Sharples and, at his command, the men had refused to disperse, on August 29 I renewed my request for federal troops and after a second investigation by federal officers who visited the scene of conflict, my recommendation was approved by Gen. Bandholtz and the troops came.

"Why U. S. Troops Were Asked. "The state has been criticized by persons unfamiliar with the gravity of the situation because federal troops were requested. West Virginia is not the only state that has requested federal troops. There are numerous instances in recent years states, and they were sent to other states, and they were sent without the measure of criticism that has been directed against this state. Why was the request made for federal troops? Because 6,000 armed men were in insurrection against the constituted authorities of a sovereign state in defiance of law at a time when the state was without a National Guard and her quota of 200 state police were engaged at other points in the enforcement of law.

"What were the basic causes of this revolution, this insurrection against the state, and then the federal government? Ostensibly, it was organized as a protest against the enforcement of martial law in Mingo county, where crime had been reduced 90 per cent, and to remove what Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor and John L. Lewis and Philip Murray, president and vice president of the United Mine Workers, and the district officers of the latter organization termed the Baldwin-Felts mine guards.

"Regardless of the assertions of Gompers, Lewis and Murray, there were no Baldwin-Felts or other mine guards in Mingo county when this insurrection occurred. I take it that these labor leaders and their lesser agents in ascribing the motive for the insurrection to be the removal of Baldwin-Felts mine guards were seeking to defend those who had risen in arms against the state of West Virginia. The Baldwin-Felts detective agency, which operates in the two Virginias, is not a popular organization. But when Gompers, Lewis and Murray assert the cause of the revolt in West Virginia was to remove the mine guards of any description from Mingo county they are seeking to camouflage an insurrection that was directed against the constituted authorities of a state by making it appear that it was directed against something which did not exist.

"Many crimes are charged by the leaders of the United Mine Workers against the so-called mine guard system that they have charged exists in Mingo and Logan counties, and doubtless many assaults have been made upon agitators and organizers and for which the transgressors should have been punished. But, even if it were true that innumerable

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crimes have been committed in Logan and Mingo counties by the so-called mine guards, these crimes were not committed against the union miners of Kanawha and Boone counties which furnished the larger number of insurrectionists.

Call Unionism Real Aim.

"It was not the elimination of the mine guard system that the leaders of the United Mine Workers sought to gain by this insurrection. It was an attempt on their part to force unionization of the Mingo and Logan coal fields, to shoot unionism into those districts if necessary.

"The mines in these two counties are operated by non-union labor, and in order to secure employment the employees have accepted voluntary reductions in wages, as have employees in many other trades when they realized that war-time wages cannot be continued.

"In the union mines of the state the officers of the United States Mine Workers have refused and declined to permit the employees to accept reduced wages during the life of the contract, which was made by the government, and which does not expire until April of next year. As a consequence, the union mines are idle much more than the non-union mines where the cost of production has been lessened, consequently lessening the cost of coal to the consumer. Except where physical conditions operate to their advantage, the union coal fields cannot compete in the present market with the non-union coal fields, and the officials of the United Mine Workers are familiar with this condition.

Highest Regard for Union Labor.

"Personally, I have the highest regard for union labor. I know from personal observation that it has accomplished much for the wage-earner in many instances. It has brought him comfort and contentment that otherwise would have been secured. But in West Virginia the miners' organization must be purged of radical and revolutionary leadership before it can expect to find a foothold among the contented miners in non-union districts.

"And the leaders of the labor movement in America, especially those who are in native authority because of the United Mine Workers, must refrain from giving their support to lawless characters who happen temporarily to be in command of the destinies of their organization in the state. The national leaders of the United Mine Workers ought to be using their efforts to free the organization from radical control rather than encouraging their district leaders to continue insurrectionary tactics in defiance of law and order."

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